

The Final Draft



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Durham Technical Community College



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The Literary Society of
Durham Technical Community College

Proudly Presents

The Final Draft

Volume 17, Number 1

Original and Previously Unpublished Work of
our Talented Students,
Faculty, and Staff

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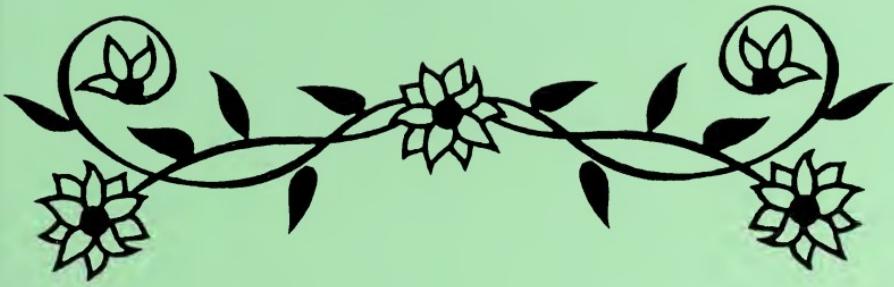




"In the middle of the journey
of our life I came to myself
within a dark wood where the
straight way was lost."



Dante Alighieri
The Divine Comedy
[c. 1310-1320].
Inferno,⁴ canto 1, 1.:



Journeys

Imagine by Maria Maschauer

Sacred Chamber by Angela R. Nguyen-Karnowski

Gypsy by Alicia de Joux

Inspiration by Alicia de Joux

Sleep Song by Dana Leigh Cheuvance

Luna Moth by Alicia de Joux

Imagine

Listen! Can't you hear it? Can't you see it?

Just close your eyes and imagine...

Picture...

The sun rising to greet you, and starting a new day.

Hear...

Thundering hoof steps galloping across the wet,
dense sand, as the birds sing their morning hellos.

Reach...

Reach for the waves, as they try to reach back, but
seem to fall short and crash onto the wet sand
below.

There you are, riding an untamed steed across the beach, slowly at first, then letting go. Letting him be his true form....letting his wild spirit run free. A sudden rush of excitement and exhilaration you've never felt before. The sensation of your horse's mane dancing in your face, the tips of the waves lapping at his hooves, and the sunrise being so perfect, neither picture nor paint could ever capture it's true beauty and spirit. All this, you think, is too real to imagine. Hearing the rhythm of his steps, feeling every movement beneath you, as

the sun makes a beautiful rainbow of pinks, blues, oranges, and yellows, and all the while, the seagulls sing their seaward songs. A white fluffy cloud comes out of the never-ending sea of breezes as you feel soft whispers in your ears from the wind. Looking behind you, you see the hoof prints embedded in the sand, being swallowed up by the warm sea-green waters below. Your horse's warm breath mixing with the chilly morning air, creates a mist which surrounds you, as if you were in a dream. In front of you, you see nothing but peaceful waters, clear skies, and miles of untouched beach waiting for you. Slowing down, the sun's rays warm you, as you take a break to catch your breath. You let your eyes go where they please, taking in all the beauty and mystery that nature has provided. The serenity of the waves, the warm breezes, the call of the gulls, everything you've ever dreamed of is here. Then, your horse neighs, making you realize that like yourself, he wants to run and have fun again. You give him the signal, and here you go again, only faster than before. Leaving behind you only the birds and the sunrise that's always shining upon you!

— Maria Maschauer

Sacred Chamber

Every once in awhile, and for no particular reason, the desire to be alone is overwhelming. My weeping wounds become too much to face, and I wonder if others can see into my soul. I fear they can, and I am ashamed of what they may see. Sadness cradles me in her womb, and I wish to be one with my thoughts. Questioning the matters of existence, I feel trapped within an empty soul; pain, like a somber garden of bleeding hearts, wraps her fingers around my very being. Why does melancholy hold me so?

I can still hear the sound of the water as it crashes against the cliff's golden sand. Even when I close my eyes, I can see the smiling sun, ablaze and delirious with passion. Its warm fire-glow shimmers across the rippling waters; the very breath is taken from me as I consume a beauty that only two elements of nature could have created. A sacred chamber, a cove in a deserted land, allows me to escape the troubles, woes, pain, and sorrow of an everyday life, supplying me with a dose of endless freedom.

When I am in the midst of this secret place, I can hear the words whisper to the depths of my soul. The bright friendliness of the orange in the sky thaws the hint of bitter cold surrounding my heart. The fairest of sapphire ceilings is my canopy of protection and privacy. The thoughts journey through my mind so quickly; I fear I may lose a single word.

A mattress beneath me, the thick, deep green sways in the constant wind, reassuring me that I may stay as long as I like. "Constant"—a word I hope to use one day to describe my life.

I breathe in the ambiance of this cove, as the melodies of romance and inspiration dance on my skin. I inhale scents and sounds, and my heart burns with remembrance of past loves and losses. A volcano of emotions is on the verge of erupting inside of me, and I release them. In the safe arms of this chamber, I can let go of many things, but nothing escapes the page. When I am here, my words seem to flow together so gracefully, so easily, that expressions and emotions seem to flow from the pages like colors. I am blinded to the people around me and to the outside noise of distraction; I hear the water shatter against the moist sand and spray its life throughout the air. I can smell the ocean's whitecap, and I can taste the salt on my tongue.

When night falls, the people and noise fade out, and closing my eyes is no longer necessary. My canopy is now deep ebony, and the moon's snow shimmers above the water's edge. As I close my journal, I sigh with contentment. I have been to the place that brings me closest to myself, and it makes me smile with delight that there is such a thing as solitude.

---Angela R. Nguyen-Karnowski

Gypsy

Young, I went far and far from home.	
Saw many and many a face; World's End	Infinitesimally small island
Cold and Wet, a lake called de Joux	in tropical seas where the Dugong
Bhutan, Masada, Heaven and Hell.	was mermaid and white men, if they came,
Blue in mosques, red skirts of dancing	perished in torrents: the gross plenty
Boys, the swirl of turbaned men.	of overblown abundance; poison – in snake
Seas freezing to ice and stowaways	scorpion, sea snake and stonefish;
In the Arctic cap of the world.	and inundations of locusts.
I have sat in sand to face lost people	Diving deep, deep in the currents
And stone age survivals brought out	Of foreign till I swam alone,
From extinction on their own	An island, distant and uncharted.

—Alicia de Joux

Inspiration

I can take this page of hills from a magazine
and make this room of electric light careen
out of sight in the margins, only the scene
remaining of ridge on ridge ascending,
layer on layer of black through charcoal and
greys of dove up to the palette of sunset.
I am somewhere in the foreground, in the dark
phantom of trees, rising like flight of birds to
revel in burnished tranquility, graceful as a
bride in colors of Chagall. I am pulling vast
sweeps of silence into my lungs, gathering the
roadmap of today into stillness, and blowing it
out of me, far away in deep exhalations that are
lost in the distant shape of mountains. I can
take this page of magazine and travel
into realms, transported as Marco Polo
gone for years along the silk road winding,
eyes set as Hillary, Douglass, or Armstrong
on some distant frontier,
inventing conquest.

—Alicia de Joux

Sleep Song

Ride it on
To the last gleaming light
One look back at Remembrance
Obstacles forgotten
for Fate has chosen
Follow
Steps descending, choose
rising above
Vision
Thorns on the black Roses
in the night
of the Garden in the Dream
dying,
the forgotten Garden
intertwining, dying
Oneness of confusion
Without separation of One
Self, withering in the night
maintain 'til morning rises
Bright Light
Shock of white, red, yellow light
Kaleidoscope, overwhelming the Garden
in the Dream
Black rose crumble to the dust
The Garden of Dreams,
Dying.

— Jana Leigh Choveanec

LUNA MOTH

Luna moth, dusting of moon
on the meander of pathway,
like dream on the veil of sleepers
wending through night, delicate
as pallor of green where pearls
of apple are setting in petal white:
you halt me here at the dark edge
of forest cresting the gully
to line the avenue: oak, maple
and tulip-flowered poplar.

Ahead, a sodium yellow holds
its umbrella undisturbed, where
flotillas of return have already
swept inside, turn now the windows
one by one to rows of night.

The only cars are curbside, and
behind, cloud-moon faint on its hill,
the embassy of Russia waits
unused for the end of dispute.

Luna moth, pale at my feet,
you ride into my thoughts like truth
into the dreamer. I take you,
amazed at your hand spread of wings,
the cellophane of your flighting,
your secret homes in the narrows
of wildness veining the city hive.

Moonbeam, though fallen and lifeless,
you have entered me, a stillness,
to hold against mountains of noise
rising: intrusion of sounds meshing
all babbled: rooms, as hollow drums,
catching strikes of multiple music;
ears pulsing to painful ear-rides
beating by; deafness encroaching
everywhere and shrinking of silence.

Alicia de Joux



“Choice word and measured
phrase, above the reach of
ordinary men.”



William Wordsworth
Resolution and Independence
[1802], st. 14



Expression

Words by Dr. Charles L. Ulbed

Prey in the Grammar Jungle by Thomas Kelly

Words

Words serve me well;
At work or play
I use these tools
For every day.

They can express
My thoughts and tears,
They frame my joys,
Describe my fears.

The very best
(O'er all above!)
Are words that speak
Of peace and love.

This world of ours
Would better be,
For everyone.
Yes... you and me...

If all of us
Used time and space
For words that make
A better place!

—Dr. Charles L. Wood

Prey in the Grammar Jungle

Writing in college has a lot to do with grammar, and I am severely tested by a poor understanding of the rules. I hear that English teachers have a high burnout rate based on the volume of students' papers they must read. I am sick of my own writing and certainly would not want to read upwards of ninety papers of similar quality. How the instructors can catch every comma error after reading more than 10 papers, I don't know. I stop seeing my own mistakes after the second draft. Partly because I know what I am trying to say, so I see what it is I'm thinking. Also, the rules for the uses of commas are complicated. Commas and semicolons do not come naturally. Having vague ideas from my far past and my unfinished high school days, I dimly see the relationships between concepts barely understood. I write by ear; commas are breaths, and semicolons are pauses. The real rules for commas are strict and exact. The farther you go in education, the more precise and prolific your writing must become. So I struggle on, writing in a style that seems unnatural, but nicely controlled; and while it takes a significant investment of time to write in the accepted manner, the end result is justified by the ease with which it can be read.

--Thomas Kelly

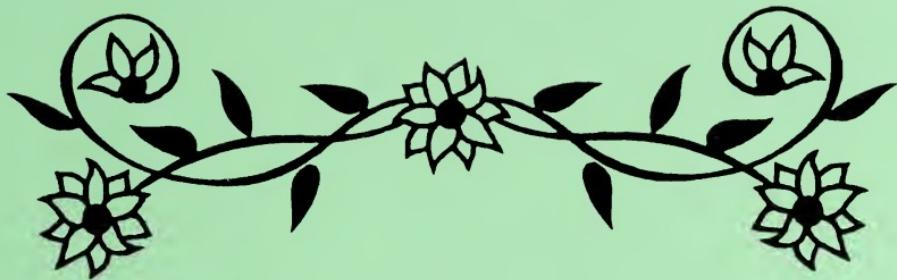


"I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood,
and I –

I took the once less traveled by,
And that has made
all the difference."



Robert Frost
The Road Not Taken [1916], st. 4



Inspiration

The Search by Dr Charles L'Hevé

Warrior by Nelle Turner

All I Can Feel by Nelle Turner

My Greater Strength, Forgiveness by Denise Duncan

The Search

I looked toward the sun, and
Its blazing light reminded me
Of one who is called
The Light of the World. And
It was His, but I did not find Him there.

I looked at the snow,
Resplendent in the infinite display of crystal forms,
And truly, the beauty was His, but
I did not find Him there.

I looked up at the stars, and saw
A glimpse of the universe
Vast beyond my understanding.
It spoke of Him who is greater than all time and space,
And it was His, but I did not find Him there.

And then I sought Him, for a moment,
In the silence of my soul,
Undisturbed, and not distorted by the things of this creation;
And in that silence,
He spoke,
And I knew that I had found Him there.

—Dr. Charles L. Wood

Warrior

I was a warrior for so long
Now all I dream of is peace
Into prisons of castles I have gone
For that was the limit of my dreams
Suiting myself only were these schemes
And still sometimes, though not as much
I do not believe I need love
Or that a warrior's flesh is entitled to such a homecoming

I broke through the door just to meet you,
There I stood
My eyes sailed a thousand seas just to greet you
There I stood
Washed up on your shore, waiting for you to deliver me
There I stood
In your Light
though I never knew
In your Mighty Chasm
And I was blind for the pounding of my own heart
In my own flesh was deafening
That I could not look outside or beyond the realm of my scope
And I was mistaken in thinking it somehow served me

Ignorant, though suspecting there was a higher good.
A different dream
When one day, while listening, that Voice said,
"God is in everything"
Which I found to become
"God is everything, everything that ever was or will be"
There was a Power so much greater than myself saying,
"Come home my child, it is time to be"
That all my many battles never brought ecstasy
That everything I once held so dear, in the beginning,
Still meant so much to me
That I was the beloved, and the Be I loved
That only Love mattered, and in Love only Truth spoke.

- Nelle Turner

all i can feel

all i can feel

your life breathing inside me

your spirit tasting every depth of me

the way you know me

every fear every insecurity

that you look at me and speak

i am human

all my frailties

every ounce of past pain

for the longing to touch

to hold

to be safe

to be free

to not fear using my voice to express

what you, God, would have me express

that i have been through the wilderness to find you

you, most beautiful one

and it is

all i can feel

inside your embrace, home

that you are here

that i have been waiting

that i never expected

that God surprises me

you know and for days ahead it is

all i can feel

to be near

that i have not hunger

for you speak to me surrender
and there is a knowing in my bones
and peace in my gut
i fall down before you
all over me
swimming through this fear
that in God all things are created anew
and this is the day we look to,
to bless with our light
because love is not simply what we do,
but who we are
that when i am in me
and you are in you,
there is only one of us here at this table
we arrive by divine appointment
to forgive and move through the ache
to heal the wounds
love is the salve of Spirit
Be not afraid
come into me
let your light shine
here i am, remember me
just like you
i have missed you for so long
that today is
all i can feel
with its promise of sunrise.

- Nelle Turner

My Greater Strength, Forgiveness

Bed of confusion that rests me
I wallow in my grief
Mistakes, not mine, would hold me
I want to know relief
 I want to know forgiveness

The nightmares that would haunt me
Fill my core with hate
That darkness only hurts me
It drives me to its fate
 It drives me from forgiveness

'Tis I that must arouse me
Defy the lurid sleep
Ought nothing to avert me
My fault is dim and deep
 My fault is not forgiveness

Old millstone set far from me
I clutch the wounded child
Dissenting deep within me
My weaknesses reviled
 My weakness bars forgiveness

I reach, but it's beyond me
A Greater Strength employ
Gently washing over me
Fills me with His joy
 Fills me with forgiveness

This joy, I find, unbinds me
The freedom it implies
Unlocks the bars around me
The child lifts and flies
The child learns forgiveness

The shackles falling from me
Forgiveness brings release
Completely mends and heals me
My core has found its peace
My core has found forgiveness

The morning comes to meet me
I clearly recognize
The light is shining through me
Exposing hatred's lies
Exposing pure forgiveness

For years the darkness held me
In slumber I would fold
My life is now before me
My Greater Strength I hold
My Greater Strength, forgiveness

—Denise Duncan

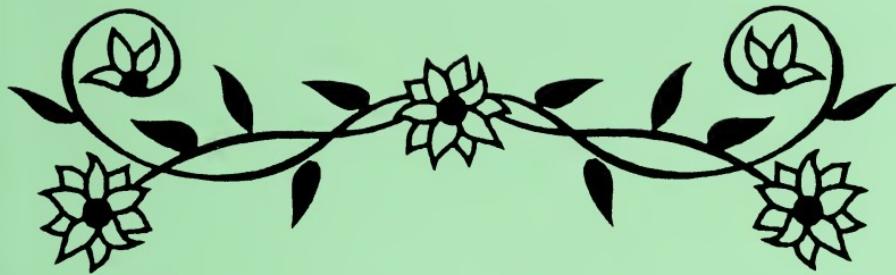




“What's past is prologue.”



William Shakespeare
The Tempest II, 1, 261



Nostalgia

My Sunday Morning Secret by Sharon Trink
Summer Evening by Mary Callender
Louisiana Summer by Mary Callender

My Sunday Morning Secret

On Easter Sunday, 1975, the church was packed with mostly old people wearing fancy hats and shawls. My mother, younger sister, and I took our seat in the front row of the church where most of the elders sit. Although I hated sitting in the front row with old folks, who always smelled like mothballs and peppermint candy, I was excited because I was going to sing a solo for the first time. However, that was the day when I learned a valuable lesson about telling the truth.

I was seven years old and all dressed up in my Sunday best: a white lacey dress with pink flower embroidery around the hem. I wore my hair in braided ponytails decorated with heart-shaped hair bows. My shoes, white patent leather flats, matched my new pink and white ruffled socks. My face was shining like a freshly polished cherry oak wood table, from all the Vaseline grease that was on it. My daddy, Deacon Jackson, a tall, skinny dark-skinned man was sitting over in the pulpit. He looked over at me slightly smiling and nodding his head, a sign that meant he approved of my cuteness and my going to sing for the Lord.

The church remained quiet, as the choir members strolled down the aisle dressed in their neatly pressed blue and white floor-length robes. They took their place in the choir stand and began singing "Let's Go Down By The River," an old Negro spiritual. People in the church began to shout "Amen," as the choir soulfully sang; the sound of hands clapping and feet tapping began to fill the church. Some people sobbed, while others danced rejoicingly. I stretched out my long, skinny legs and began tapping my feet together rhythmically to the beat of the drums. I began bopping my head in a manner that made my ponytails dance. The church became stuffy and reeked a musty odor from all the dancing and shouting. People were sweating and fanning themselves vigorously with homemade fans, while muttering their last words of "amen" and "hallelujah."

The church was at a familiar silence, the same silence it had before the choir sang. My mother gently placed her hand on my bony knee and whispered, "Go ahead honey it's time for you to sing." I sprang to my

feet and pranced toward the platform. With one hand on my hip, I clutched the microphone as the organist began to play to the song "Amazing Grace." Suddenly, I realized that I was not able to sing the song. I stood before the congregation-- voiceless. People with plum-purple and honey-brown faces stared at me intently. My mother gazed at me with a concerned look on her face. I could hear a nervous quiver in daddy's voice as he exclaimed, "Sing baby! Sing for the Lord!" My legs felt like jelly, and my stomach was tied in knots. Tears began rolling down my black, glossy face, for I could not sing the song. Finally, the choir began to sing, relieving me from utter embarrassment. Once again, people in the church began shouting and dancing as the choir sang. With my head bowed, I sobbed as I ran to my seat.

I laid stretched out on the pew sobbing with my head buried in my mother's lap. I wanted to tell her about my secret. The day before Easter Sunday, I lied when she asked me if I knew the words to the song. I told her I did but, the truth was I did not. I lied so that I would be able to play with my friend instead of learning the song. I planned to learn the song later that day, but somehow I forgot.

Later that day, I sat in my room with my mother and continued to cry, but before I could stop crying long enough to tell her my secret, she calmly stated, "I hope you learned your lesson." I gasped, as I realized that she knew. Through all my cuteness, my secret managed to manifest itself. With teary eyes, I began apologizing to my mother for telling her a lie. As she wagged her finger in my face she said, "Now you know why the good book says-- thou shalt not lie!" On that day I understood the consequence of telling a lie, and I vowed never to lie again.

Sharon Frink



SUMMER EVENING

My father turns the Ford into the driveway,
weary from his Mississippi trip.

He pulls the watermelon from the back seat,
proud of his backwoods purchase.

I draw near, happy to see him,
and happy for the watermelon.

Gruffly, he tells me to get out of the way,
the watermelon is heavy for a sixty-year old man.

He carries it up the steps and
presents it to my mother

Who accepts his gift,
packing it in ice for an after-supper treat.

Tension--there is always tension at supper time.

I hate vegetables and my mother loves them.

She makes me eat them before I get dessert.

That sweet, iced watermelon is her weapon this night.

My father supports her, popping me on my head
with the handle of a knife when I argue
or thumping my head with his middle finger.

I am always surprised when the thump comes,
for I believe that the vegetables are torture enough,
especially turnip greens, spinach, and turnips.

When I grow up, I will never eat those vegetables again,
and I will certainly not make my children eat them--
cruelty is unnecessary.

Since I know the watermelon is waiting,
I hold my nose and swallow the greens,
Convinced that I am the only child in Louisiana
burdened with such mean parents.

I am dismissed from the table,
another meal survived; watermelon, my reward.

Our family gathers outside in the shade of the sour gum tree.

I carry the forks and napkins; my sister, the plates.

My father gently places the watermelon on the iron-grill table.

My mother brings the long sharp knife and plunges it
into the thick, green rind.

I hear the watermelon split, cracking apart,
and smell the sweetness of the pink juices as they flow out
onto the ground.

My mother gives me a center slice, the sweetest, while she and my father
content themselves with pieces nearer the end.

Happily, I scoop a bite-size piece from the middle and put it in my mouth,
Sweet juices run down my chin.

The black seeds are a challenge for me to remove,
so I get my mother to help.

I climb the sour gum tree and spit seeds at my sister, who complains.

My father chuckles and my mother fusses,
knowing my sister is too old for such play.

Everyone relaxes with the sweet fruit filling their bellies
and the pressures of the day relenting.

I carry the rinds to the compost heap and then escape to play kick-the-can.

My mother and father stay outside and watch us play.

My sister carries in the dishes.

The sun is setting on a perfect
Summer evening.

Mary Callender

Louisiana Summer

Summer evening, setting sun,
Supper's eaten, dishes done.
Youngsters gather in the park.
Kick-the-can's about to start.

1--2--3--4--5--6--7
8--9--10 and now 11.
Children finding hiding places,
Under bushes, next to trees.
Running quickly, finding spaces,
Hiding badly, skinning knees.
Strategizing, making plans,
Finding places near the can.

12--13-----19--20
"Ready or not, Here I Come!"
Shouts the "it" and out she runs.
Searching, yet, staying near,
The can she guards with care.
We are watching, waiting, careful,
Timing moves, crawling near,
Creeping, crawling, to the can.

Spotted, suddenly I start running.
Running , running to the can.
Out-of-breath and straining muscles,
I must beat her to the can.
Kick the can first! I must hustle,
Thrust my chest out, pump my arms.
I see the can, no time to quit.
Kick. Bam. Clang of tin.
Someone else will next be "it."

Mothers call their children homeward.
Time for showers, time for sleep.
All will play again tomorrow,
Summer joys we'll always keep.

—Mary Callender





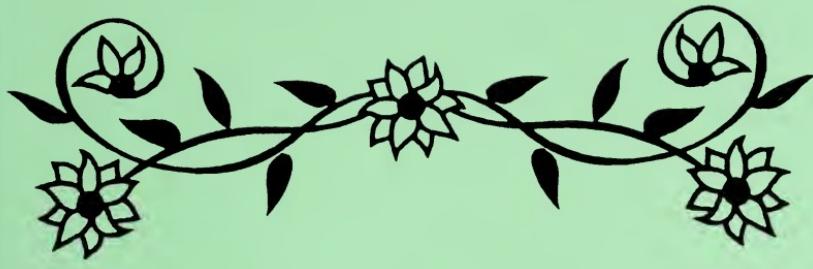
"And then I drink your
beauty up

Leaving no drop in the
bewildering cup—

Yet still the cup is full."



John Keats
Endymion [1818]



Passion

Sounds Like Winter is Approaching by Nelle Turner
Wintry Place by Stephanie Cash
I'm So Crazy About You by Denise Duncan
See Me as You by Nelle Turner

Sounds Like Winter is Approaching

Sounds like winter is approaching
leaves crunching under feet
walking gently
a fox in the distance hunting
as we walk to find shelter under the stars
welcoming love
and we are just two of these in the world
yet we cry together one
blend into moons seen through the mind's eye
We open to stars within
find God in the distance of miles our souls have traveled to
this point in time for this, now
it is not so hard to realize this
the more I am out of my head with it
you are an old friend
feel as if it has been forever
since we have touched
yet we have been touching all along
for what does love come
but to heal

—Nelle Turner



Wintry Place

All day the white chocolate snow falls upon the ground.
The wind dusts over the river, throwing an eerie sound.
Gazing out my window with a longing look,
Counting the moments till I will meet you by that river brook.
I will meet you there as we have done in seasons past,
One glimpse of you this season will strive to last.
Over that river bridge shall I see you descend,
Your long locks being raped by the wind.
That blue ribbon that holds back your hair,
Always you wear it, as if born with it there.
The blueness of your eyes shall meet my most unworthy look,
And soon into my arms you will return the breath you have took.
This vision in my mind is interrupted by the stroke of four,
I grabbed my coat and flowers and flew out the door.
The snow was as thick as a sheet of silky lace,
I scramble on the ice to find the right place.
I look up at the bridge as I wait by the river,
The wind blows in anger and I start to shiver.
The hours do pass in a wintry pace,
The snow starts to lighten and I can't feel my face.
“My love couldn’t make it, the snow was too deep,
She is likely at home in bed fast asleep.”
The sun then peeked through, as if a pointer to make,
On an object that floated slow on the lake.
My eyes came to focus on the object so near,
It was the blue ribbon that belonged to my dear.

— Stephanie Cash

I'm So Crazy About You

You told me "dare to dream" and then to "face my fears"
This wallflower didn't know how
I was too afraid to find out who I could be
You showed me, by example, that you "just do it"
Nike couldn't have said it better
But baby, you're the best
I thought I had "men" figured out
You surprised me in the nicest way
But it took me so long to trust you
It took me so long to accept that anyone could be so good
I was too afraid that I could be wrong about you
I've been wrong before and I know that pain
I never knew anyone could care as much as I do
(Not just pretend to care about doing things right)
Or love in the same language of the heart
Or have such a pure heart
Or want the very same things
The same way... we're same-same
You get silly with me and tickle me pink,
Or should I say "pickle me tink?"
One of these days you're going to be ticklish, I just know it
Until then, I'll tickle you by saying silly things
...Let's take the Harley and fly to our tower in Paris today
And by singing my silly songs
And we sing love songs to each other
Though neither of us can carry a tune
But it's always fun to be goofy with you
And you sweep me off my feet
As we dance to all the songs that we call ours
You are such a romantic — hey, isn't that our moon?
And I love to be serious with you
The depth is tremendous
When I look you in the eye, I see your soul
I see your dignity, and I see your strength
I know your past, and you know mine
And we know why we appreciate what we have
We take time to appreciate what we have

Even though we're so busy, you always ask me about my day
And you listen
We share our joys and sorrows as they come
And they make us stronger
You work so hard, and you're so responsible
I don't know how you do it
Everything always works out
We hold each other accountable for doing our best
Luck is where opportunity meets preparation
You excel in both
You make your luck, and then you're blessed to boot
I never knew anyone like you, except maybe me
When you're wrong you admit it
But you're almost always right (how do you know so much?)
You are a "knower" and I'm a "knower" too sometimes
And when we see things differently, we find the middle
We debate so well
Together we work it out and it's beautiful
You have taught me so much, and you let me teach you
We know that the two of us put together have balance
A balance that neither of us would have alone
You support me and encourage me
You respect me for me
You have taken the time to know me in every way
I am certainly blessed among women
I have found a wise man, who is patient and kind
Who knows the ways of the world
As well as the way to heaven
And you take me there in your love and devotion
Yes, we'll grow old together
We'll be a little eccentric, to be sure,
But we'll be a cute couple, still then
I'll always be grateful for the man you are
And I'll always be in love with you.

That's why I say I'm so crazy about you
...But I've never been so sane

— Denise Duncan

See Me as You

Will you take a chance, I wonder, with me
Will we come out from these shadows clean
Will I still be me in me
If you choose, then be sure to let this seep through slowly
I am grateful for this opportunity to love God
And you keep telling me to base this decision on me
I awaken before four in the morning
With you on the tip of my tongue
Yet, how do I let go of someone else's love?
I shudder to think
In your eyes I have never been more afraid
For I know the breaking of a heart
And you could split me in two
I would still walk, yes
I would still love, yes
You, I suppose, trust God in me to do the right thing
As I do you
We await creation in the sunrise
I find heaven again in your eyes
As you welcome me in
Remember you invited me to stay
I traveled there to find you
I was hesitant to enter out of respect for you
I felt compelled
Once I was there I didn't want you to find me, but you did
And you wanted me to stay and trust
You said you could help me sleep
The difference today is we are wiser, like never before
Knowing the mistakes of the past
Not as willing to rush in
Not as willing to be apart from the earth
Head over heels
Because we need the ground to stay centered
Will you pray this through with me

Can our knees touch the floor together on this one
Because my darling, if I hold your hand
I may never want to let go
Though I must surrender you to the sea
And pray we don't drown
Pray we are supported by the waves
That we float and not get sucked under between us this chemistry,
electricity
This overwhelming power
God is not the author of fear
We do that
By not trusting what we know,
Or what we don't want to believe
Infinite possibility
We lay foundation in friendship
Pour the concrete there
Walk to the water to find The Christ
Within
That fear was but a dream
That never had a basis in truth
Turn me over like a fall leaf
Hold on baby
My heart is open too
See, I'm just like you
Look in my eyes
See everything you have always been
See everything you are
The sun will continue to rise
Hold on baby
God has given me your hand
Love has given us life
We let go because it is the only thing left to do.
Gracias a Dios (Thank God)

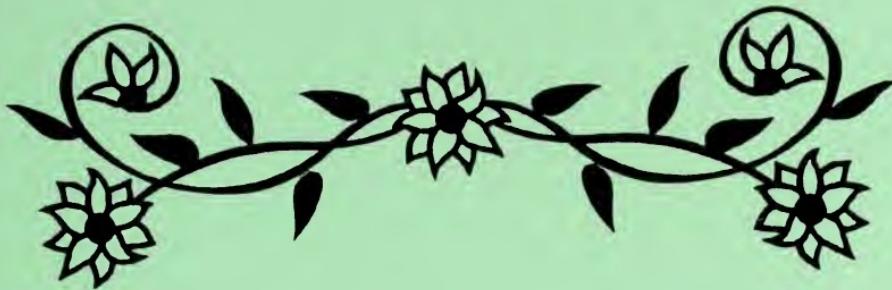
—Nelle Turner



"Life is short,
The art long,
Timing is exact,
Experience treacherous,
Judgment difficult."



Hippocrates
.Aphorisms, sec. I. 1



Insight

A Life Experience Endured by Cecilia Black
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A Life Experience Endured

Childhood playtime was a special time to enjoy a fun-filled day doing whatever with your best friend. My mom would say, "Have fun and stay out of trouble!" On a warm spring day, our playtime together was suddenly interrupted, and the events that followed brought me face-to-face with a new life experience that someday we all will have to endure.

Rachel and I were the same age. She was born on February 29th, leap year, and I was born one month before. I admired Rachel for her gutsy personality, and she was loquacious in nature like myself. Rachel was the youngest girl in her family. Her stature was tall and slender built; she had a dark complexion and slightly bucked front teeth (a known trait of the Toy family). She wore three long braids that featured her "baby hair" smoothed down around her face with Dixie Peach hair grease.

On that warm spring day, I woke up early and finished my chores; then I got dressed and met my best friend. We met outside my house and decided to play jump rope instead of cutting out paper dolls, and I grabbed the long nylon clothesline under my arm. Together, we safely crossed the one-way street and strolled up the brick sidewalk to the G Street Baptist Church. This red-bricked single story church had the perfect rusty gothic fence to fasten a rope to. We delighted in each new day, and made it our business to learn a new song or do new tricks while jumping rope. We were loud at play singing, "All, all, all in together girls. Nobody but the girls. See the teacher tapping on the window. Shall I, shall I, shoo? January, February...." Meanwhile, several large, black, shiny vehicles approached the church and parked parallel, beside the curb. Two older gentlemen wearing dark suits emerged from the car and entered the church; we continued to play.

Suddenly, the doors of the church were opened and we looked up. Rachel and I walked up the front steps of the church, looked in, and saw that the church's pews were empty. My eyes wandered around the church until they came to the pulpit, and there appeared a small, white casket, one the size of a school-aged child. There were many flowers, and it looked like a brilliant spring garden with many shades of pastels. The white casket was centered in the middle like a fountain. Inside the white chest laid a beautiful, dark-skinned girl with jet black, thick, curly hair. The church smelled of fresh flowers. To this day, I am filled with this profound memory when I smell or see flowers. She was dressed in all white, except the black patent leather shoes that embraced her feet. The coffin was draped with a pink veil that allowed her neatly dressed body to show full-view.

I stood stiff in the framed doorway of the small brick church. Rachel dared me to go in and touch the girl. I felt scared and curious at the same time. After all, I was not dressed properly to enter that house of worship. Rachel entered and left me alone to walk the red-carpeted pathway by myself. I took my last glance at the sleeping child; I didn't recognize her to be a child from our neighborhood, and I thought to myself, this was a different type of sleep, for there was no movement in that cushioned box that held her like a mother would cradle her newborn. I was confused, so I ran away. While running home I realized she was dead, and the mystery child would never jump rope to her favorite childhood rhythm.

A few hours later, curiosity got the better of me. I returned to the corner of 11th and G Streets. There, from a safe distance, I observed that Rachel was among the small gathering of her family

and friends outside the church. Many of them were young children; perhaps they were her classmates from her school. The funeral service was over, and they retreated to the black limousines that lined the street. The white hearse was parked first. The coffin and the spray of flowers were brought out and placed inside the vehicle. Silently the funeral procession drove off, taking away the black opal in a chest.

What I remembered most was feeling angry with Rachel for leaving me alone. I often wondered what this experience would have been like if Rachel had taken me by the hand, and together we had succeeded in conquering the death experience. I am still afraid, I am deeply saddened, and I feel a sense of loneliness when there is a passing of a loved-one or close friend.



Even though I never discussed the events of that day with anyone in my family, to my surprise, when I read this essay to my two older sisters, I learned that they too had visited and paid their respects to the sleeping doll. Furthermore, when we began to discuss the events of that day, we were able to recall the same details except for a slight difference in the child's age. I came to the conclusion that death doesn't have to be a bad or frightening experience; it's merely a continuation of life. Thus I endured.

—Cecilia Black

Field

There's something about the feel of strangers. Perhaps that's why Franklin Street appealed to me so much. People bustle about, brushing shoulders, sometimes never even noticing one another. Life springs from every corner there. From the people hurrying about to the silent few whom watch from the sidelines, rarely noticing that the bits of glass caught in the crevices of the street tiles or the paper wrappers of long forgotten delights seem to have a life of their own. They too must struggle along the street fighting for their "rightful" place. It all seemed like a part of the scene to me. The trash and filth that lay about never took a position of ill wealth. It just seemed natural that these lifeless entities would hold their own and stand out among the other living beings.

Franklin Street was a popular meeting place for us teens. Anyone who was anyone could be found there, flirting, "smoking", or just hanging out, and I was no exception. I met a girl on "Franklin", as we called it, whose name had a resonating ring to it that could find nowhere to land in the back of my mind. Rose stood on the post office corner with some friends of mine from school. They had been looking for a drummer to replace the one in their band. They had no luck in finding one and the lead guitarist, in interest of the band, had decided to change instruments. Rose, it seemed, could play quite well and was instantly adopted by my friends as the new lead guitarist. This beautiful lady had impressed me with her music as well as her name. It was shortly thereafter that we started dating.

Rose was a very pleasant girl and went to private school in Durham. I was amazed by how different she was from other girls that I had met, particularly those on Franklin. She had an awareness about her that seemed tuned into something I could not place. I would catch her, at times, looking off into the distance. When I'd ask what she was looking at, she would reply "Nothing". "I can see that," I'd say "there's a lot of it around." I knew what nothing was. It was the bits of glass and paper, the slow moving traveler whom I had never seen before, the whine of car engines that steamed past. Nothing was something, but it was not the nothing as I saw it. I would dismiss it, eventually, as some difference in the environments we had grown up in.

I had more freedom than most kids my age; I was the soul that had bought his own car and whose parents had hardly noticed his absence in the past year. I would leave lunch at my school and drive to Rose's to see her. Her school was set back in the woods and did not have a typical set of rules to be followed. I could see kids from the drive where I waited. They played, sat in circles, and all while in the conduct of class. I remember thinking how lucky these kids were to have such an opportunity. It surely beat the policed halls in my high school. Rose first came to the car with a teacher, the first of her friends I was to meet, which was polite and respectfully warned me that class started back at one. At lunch Rose invited me home to meet her mother. That would have bothered me if it had not been for the carefree attitude of her teachers. I was sure not to meet any opposition from her parent.

Later that evening, I found myself driving through miles of still trees that had abandoned their leaves in preparation for the winter. The grass too had on a yellow tint that hinted at a dying time in Mother Nature's cycle. It was very different from the tiled Franklin I knew so well. When the wind blew here it was not recognized by the rustling of paper, but by the clicking of branches and the freedom dance of fallen leaves. "Such a long drive with so little to see," I thought. When I arrived, I was greeted graciously by Rose's mother. I could never see what Rose saw in me and had no idea what she told her mother. Nerve racked by Rose's absence, I tried to find a quick escape. "Is that the field Rose tells me about?" "Yes," she said, as I sighed with relief, "It's beautiful isn't it?" "It certainly is. I think I'll go have a look see."

The tall grass had been pushed over in places so as to make a path to the center of the field. It was nearing dark, and I could hear the wind speaking better than ever. There was a place to lie in the center of a circle at the end of the makeshift trail. I made myself comfy and watched as the stars unfolded before me. I must have drifted nearly to sleep watching and listening to the sights and sounds that I had not noticed since I was a child. It could not have been more than a few minutes, and I was sure Rose would be out of the shower. I stood up and instantly noticed a deer standing close enough to touch.

Startled and frightened, I did not move till the deer went about his way chopping at the grass. Slowly I began to back away and turn to make my escape from the beast. As I turned about I noticed that it was not a mere chance meeting of a deer but that they had surrounded me.

Amazed, I tried to pick out the numbers out of the tall grass. They didn't mind the mumbling or finger pointing and chopped away like I was never there. I stopped counting after eight and decided just to look for a moment. Nearly completely dark, light from the moon shown down to reveal the field's eerie presence. A sudden noise rang out from the house and the hill startling the deer off to cloak themselves in the woods. "Victor?", Rose called out. I didn't answer right away; my mind had been captivated by the occurrence of such an unlikely event for this "city boy." She ran up the path to meet me as I turned. "Hey! What happened?", she said in an excited voice. "I just met a bunch of deer out here," I said. "They scared the hell out of me." "Really?" "Well, dinners ready. Let's go. I think my mom likes you!" We walked back up the path close together to keep the wind off our skin, staring in each other's eyes the way people in love do. I looked down as I walked up the field, noticing that the grass had taken on a white hue, and turned one last time to see the wind touch the tree tops and brush its way across the field.

The next day I sat on Franklin waiting for the fun and games to begin. It looked different somehow. The smell, the glass, the paper, all seemed dead. Lifeless, as it really is. I did not feel as comfortable for a moment but that was quickly remedied by the arrival of my friends. We went about the night in our usual pattern, stopping for coffee and then out to our favorite wall. As we sat the wind picked up. A leaf danced past and the rustling of branched could be heard behind me. I turned to look and see what tree could have set free such a happy leaf; surely I would have noticed it before. There was a small tree nestled in a corner where a small brick path led to a neighboring street. I didn't remember seeing it before. I had never noticed it. It stood there and condemned the life I knew on Franklin. I stared into the darkness lost in my thoughts for a moment. "What are you looking at?" said Rose. "Nothing." I smiled and looked into her eyes and said "Nothing at all."

—Victor Cash

If You Truly Love Me....

If you truly love me, why give flowers?

Sure, they are romantic

...But are not flowers the enemy?

They are supposedly the symbol of love,

Yet they resemble a couple's worst fear.

They are wonderful, and pretty, but only for a while.

Then they die, like a relationship that doesn't last long.

Why not give something that will last forever,

Like a picture of memories surrounded in a silver frame.

Sure, you might have to polish it now and then—

Just like you have to do with any relationship.

But in the end, it always shines!

The best present a person can get, is the devotion from another to spend their whole life with you. Together, forever.

Truly the present of a lifetime!

—Maria Maschauer



Traces

My saline tears won't dry out eyes for you
I was there, felt your beauty
Saw your soul through my new eyes you opened with your love
Isn't this the way it is supposed to be
That I would cry, that you would have to release me
I'm so sorry, God I am, for any way in which
I may have bruised your rough edges
Sometimes I wish I wasn't me
Sometimes I wish I could be the person you need me to be
Then you wouldn't want me
We went in baby
We went in real deep,
Somewhere the Euphrates and the Ganges meet
We were back there
Way before this life ever began for us
Way before we became minds that were too smart for souls
You showed me how good bodies can be
We paved that road to ecstasy
Now grass and roots begin to grow
Where we laid our love down
Nights in the gardens rolling around
We became moon and sky
And we were that, and we shared a life second to none for a long rime
Now as I look in your eyes I know it's over
You concede the same
There is no anger or fault
Only the twists and turns of time
Nothing ends where something doesn't begin
There is always an opening
Sometimes it seems so deep
Other times I touch the center of the universe
And rest in the arms of all those who have come before
And sense the breath of all those who will follow
We will walk in the light, meet on the other side
I know you are waiting for a reunion
This year we celebrated no anniversary
I fell among the leaves, my dreams left you
Now you get to go and find yours
And I would give you nothing less than this day
To go in and heal
To go in and feel

Nelle Turner

Question

Forget life's easy confines
Dare to ask
Which definition of "end" do you believe in?
Do you live?

I live!
My solid power slide
Blocking cloudy sky view
Open wiiiiide
Dare to ask

Do you live in your mind?
My mind is home
Puzzled to be held
How can naked not be free?

My "end" is shady
My definition undefined
The "end" spells blank
And my mind
Oh yes,
My mind lives solely to be free.

—Jana Leigh Chovanec

Spin

I spend my energy on circles
What is of importance
When I myself am lost
Barely woman
Still mostly girl
Forced into the circle
I do not have the skill
I'm not yet prepared to be strong
Alone I tremble in my bones
Facing my world with a facade of strength
At a glance it deteriorates

As a girl
I had the strength of a thousand men
Now, I am tired
Too much living for this little girl

Maybe I will give into the wolves
They howl and prowl around my door
Along with the wind
WWWHHOO AARREE YYOOUUUU?

Invert
Eyes are mirrors
Who do you see?
Yesterday it was someone else

Blow me away, wind
Tomorrow I may be myself again.

—Jana Leigh Chovanec

Whisper

They're gonna build skyscrapers here eventually
All these clouds turn to glass and metal sea
Pine forests may some remain
Though it won't be the same
All the wealth of the cities of the north will filter down
As will poverty
The divisions among the rich and the poor will grow wider
as the need for water increases everyday
Trees will be cut in the name of lust
More greenback for Gringo's
Shall we fault the poor man for doing what he needs to do
to try to rise above
Hopelessness
He is condemned
With a war on drugs
Drugs the Gringo gave him
Genocide when we must fight amongst ourselves
All part of the plan
To not pay attention to the actions of Mr. G

Tune in and turn off
Believe there is a hell
Right here, right now

Tune in and turn off
Die right in from of Brokaw, Rather, Jennings
CNN innings won by feeding the masses
Consuming precious resources
Eat it up, buy another car
This luxury dining room set can be yours if
The price is...
Long, long, long after we leave what is left for our children
Residue of Dow and DuPont
All compliments of Mr. G
When will we ever learn

I know where to find fear, somewhere
In the quest for external power to control and manipulate
To enslave the Earth and her people

I wonder from where you came
To support a man like Pinochet
To only help when it serves you

To enslave
Women and their children for shoes
We wear without thinking twice
We throw away what they could eat on for a month
Is it that our souls are obese?
Are we looking for more places to hide
We starve for love we can't find
A woman begs for a dime
Ain't got the time, ain't got the time

It's easier not to look
There is many a day I turn my head
Can't take it all on

I wonder where is The Dream now
Buried beneath church bombings, gay bashing,
that joke your co-worker told
you know the one, where they shut up when the saw the ni...
Did I say... oh, must have slipped... African American
Still see it all around

The hate
I even took some on, at one time 'cause I did not care about myself
The dilemma I see is low self-esteem
We can't teach our children what we don't know ourselves,
What it is to feel worthy of love
That there is one race, Humanity:

1. The human race, people
2. Being human
3. Being humane, kind-heartedness

Tell them you've been sent with a Higher purpose
Find it walk on the water show them My life was not in vain tread softly
love thy neighbor as thyself show them become part of the solution love
yourself blessed are the peacemakers for they shall inherit Love give, give,
give, those to whom much is given, much is expected, Love Me these and
greater things ye shall do. Go to The Mountain, stand where He stood,
never imagine yourself as an individual different from Love.

—Nelle Turner

Sister Ray

I have a little wishbox full of dreams for you
where you can put it all together
these pieces of an unconnected life
that seem to make no sense
have I ever told you how much my heart aches for
you

to see as I have always seen,
though it was you who used to pull me out of a
dream

return me to reality

and for helping you, I feel as if I fail horribly
I shall hope you find someone, perhaps inside
who can make it all better
though sometimes the ache lasts for mile longer
than it feels like we have to go . . .

On with the living room, it will be just another day
the heart was torn from the pain it had stored for
some sunny or rainy way
you know me like the wind in autumn,
you have watched me grow and change
Perhaps it is for you I will be there, as the winds
of change blow your way
when you peer inside to sing your song
and realize it was really you, there all along.

You just forgot the keys to the kingdom, perhaps
no one told you who they were for
you
waiting for you all along.

I cannot make the merry-go-round
cease, for it is up to you to step off. I did my time
there dear sister

Winter winds will blow and you'll remember a
home, something that made sense, before the
carousel tricked you like that fox in the field
escaping the hounds,

he draws us away when we need to be near
and will have us believing all kinds of things,
like we are unworthy of the goodness we already
are

like love is something that comes from outside,
but never from within, he lies and lies and lies
telling us we would be better off to die when our
purpose here is to love
and leave traces of smiles
in the sands before there were dunes
that I come from love,
and you were me and I was you.

—Nelle Turner

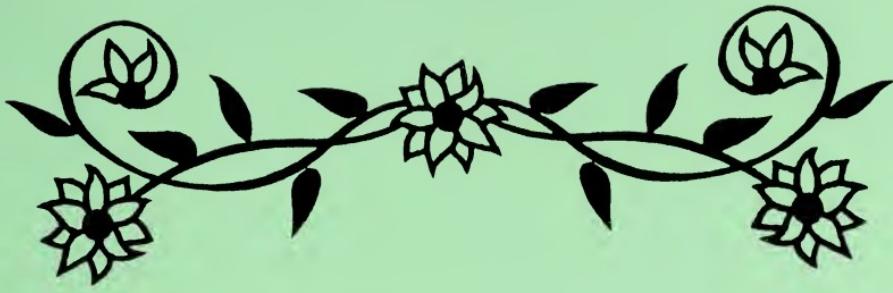


"If he wrote it he could
get rid of it.

He had gotten rid of many
things by writing them."



Ernest Hemingway
Winner Takes Nothing [1933]
Fathers and Sons



Rifts

Sincerity by Stuart Newnam

Love's Fear by Darin J Steele

Symptoms by Stuart Newnam

Triggers Sobriety by Chris (Inscor)

Scenery by Stuart Newnam

Clouds of Silver Mist by Chris (Inscor)

But My Clothes... by Chris (Inscor)

I'm Leaving You a Smile by Stuart Newnam

I Know by Maria Maschauer

How Can You Not Feel This? by Chris (Inscor)

Core by Chris (Inscor)

Hard Pill by Nelle Turner

Consumption by Angela R. Nguyen-Karnowski

That Sky by Nelle Turner

Sincerity

On a catch phrase?

Error mistaken from facial expressions?

Alight from eyes once familiar.

So i misplaced the answer for invitation.

Once, nice to have known you or what i needed to know was you.

& i still want to stand here holding letters

as the sky grows brilliant then dim,

Making out the figures from this seclusion.

Your form endless defining perfection.

While the orchard of which has chosen to die, now slowly ages

upon the edge of progress,

Growing nearer?

Staring down, i mark the days by your smile, weeks by laughter.

Existence is futile.

Weighted moments spent within illusions

for a future built in the past,

Beautified by every passing hour,

Ordained by my reflection in dying eyes.

—Stuart Newnam



LOVE'S FEAR

IN A RELATIONSHIP,
OF IMPORTANCE, IT IS ALWAYS THE FIRST IMPRESSION.
ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR HEART,
IT'S WHAT YOU BELIEVE,
IT'S YOUR PERCEPTION

IN A RELATIONSHIP,
WE SOMETIMES LOSE OUR WAY. CONSEQUENTLY,
WE FIND OURSELVES AT THE
EXPENSE OF SOMEONE'S
PAST LOVE OR DISMAY.

IN A RELATIONSHIP,
IN FACT, THEY SOMETIMES SHOW YOU EYES OF CONCERN.
HOWEVER, IT'S ONLY MOMENTARILY
BECAUSE IT'S THEIR LESSONS OF LIFE
YOU HAVE TO LEARN.

IN A RELATIONSHIP,
THIS SPECIAL SOMEONE HAS LOST THEIR ABILITY
TO SHOW UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.
THEIR FEARS CONSUME THEM,
DEFENSIVELY THEY PUSH
BEFORE THEY SHOVE. . .

—Darin T. Steele

symptoms

the creatures of elegance, dispelling carnal knowledge.
welcome to forget.

your perseverance distrustful, invitations of eyes without reproach.
the dilemma of a misanthropic construance, by selfish interests.
constricted process so prevalent;
misleading the appearance of innocence.
of self-captivated identity.

perseverance, what you convey, emptiness.
what have you been waiting for?
something to be waiting for?
shake?
watch the fire.

decision from the tears.
i will not ask for a love i will not see.
i am blind.

fearless in familiarity, hollow words of recitation.
i should defend,
yet from where i stand i have lost meaning in the battle,
pierce my armor, time and time again.

—Stuart Newnham

Triggers Sobriety

I left him with wounds and now
I write with red ink
I know it sounds horrible
my new sugar in the raw
your passion makes me question
you do not release it
a easy cool breeze that blew threw me
entangles me, confuses you
How could I not want you?
regrets in the morning
no follow through and
nothing can get this stain out
I could make a meal out of you
I can tear my teeth into your perfect flesh
I sit here like a good girl
waiting till you say it is okay
all right to bite
I have been crushed and it all adds up to you
smashing my hands down
noises make a rhythm that triggers sobriety

—Chris Inscoe

Scenery

Movements I haven't seen
Parallel actions
Counting wet footprints behind
The goal left daunting
& the fear escaping your eyes

Pendulum star light frequency
momentum builds
unraveling chain mail armor
creating invisibility
reliving memories

Left your plants out in the sun
dying from the thirst
late night watchmen who
screaming, torched your embassy
but I dropped the styrofoam cup to watch the string fall
'cause I was not listening anyway.

— Stuart Newnam

Clouds of Silver Mist

Clouds of silver mist
hanging low
inside I went
into the wet clammy
gloominess of the woods
I kept feeding him
no home
take her now
my golden hour
dooming sadness in my heart
demons of hell
ripped apart
my impossible dream
listen to me
hear my cries
emotions tangled with fists
carrying the world on my shoulders
Does it make it right?
this blue funk is plaguing me

—Chris Inscoe

But my clothes...

Here I am standing all alone
with no arsenal but my clothes
there he is should I say hello?

I don't think so
he's with someone else,
Does he love her so?

Is there anything in his heart for me?
No, I don't think so since I'm standing here
all alone with no arsenal but my clothes
he passes by and says hello
he shoots that weapon smile
that I've missed so and when
he goes I know because I'm standing
here all alone with arsenal
but my clothes

—Chris Inscoe



I'm leaving you a smile

One biting word in exchange for yours.

Sleeping? Sleeping conversation another chance to spend your restless life questioning intentions.

What a child would after all. . .

Burden interaction emoting growing distinctive, lacquering the eyes.

Beautifying sight?

Contrived expectations. . . draining bodies like gutting fish.

Conditioning the perfection of a schematic paradigm.

Identity lost once found.

Discovery shut down, filing stolen perceptions.

Chamber honey covered shadow boy.

Come love the expression of dying hope.

One that slides within the guts of a dream, washing over invisibility.

—Stuart Newnam

I Know

I know the pain.

The pain that grips you, clinging to you, ripping you apart-shred by shred, numbing moment after numbing moment, never letting go.

Like a red-hot laser piercing you throughout again and again. It stings you front to back, side to side, from top to bottom until you don't know who you are anymore.

You ask yourself, "Why is this happening?" "Who am I?" "Why can't I feel anything?" "Why can I only feel this tingling numbness?"

As the laser scores the word of death, Death, DEATH....tears run down a metal wall, like the ones on my face.

Death. Knowing that this isn't a dream, and you'll never wake up from this awful reality.

Never seeing that smile, never hearing that voice, never feeling that warm hug again!

why?....Why?...:WHY?

Like the sorrow-stained tears that drip off my face onto my soft, comforting, silk shirt, pure of having no imperfections.

The tear is slowly absorbed in the material, then into the soul of the fabric stained forever.

No longer what is once was-as I am, stained, heart and soul. Forever and for all time!

—Maria Maschauer

How Can You Not Feel This?

How can you not feel this?
like gum stuck in my hair
I have taken this further
into that place that is forbidden
untouchable and paper thin
I am not hiding in that gray cave
an unreachable planet or part of my soul
jaw breaking apart
I feel it
hurting you but I cannot stop
not for the life of me
the life scratching in heavenly places at my door
for I feel full
full in my mouth
beyond this world that we live in
realms which we can swim in at nights
break in and steel love
what we need most
a style that lasts forever
what the hell
this does not matter to you
that this is for you
pause as you come
forward with signs of myself

—Chris Inscoe

Fever of harems
endless mirrors facing you
over cities and stars
the creature
your fake feelings feeling me
sorry for you
green dwarfs at the back door
wearing frowns
girls bed of sweet sweat
pass this unbearable lump to
slam into another door
dead is truth
with zombie eyes
natural enslavement
did I forget ?
not looking at me
you made a slip
you did not know me
see you on the streets
what was I supposed to do ?
regrets of sorrow
hurt looks I cannot swallow
stand away from you
because I'm female
wrongful deeds
your embarrassment needs
washing away with all you dirt
see I lived

leaving me now
steps to my partner of the soul
inevitable to be my
meal of fine juices
that blood pumping through your heart
will be mine one day
drown myself in an ocean
of your cowardice
I know you feel
you wanted me
unhappiness lingers on
what lies beyond ?
that was only one side
one side of me
freedom burns you to a crisp
spilling hot tea like a baby
this tip was meant to wound me
I feel the heat radiating off you
I'm not as fresh as I once was
there must be hope after all
bending and sleeping in cocoons
living to be this goddess
he hunts for the core
daring me to fly
invoking the power within
he hunts for my core

—Chris Inscoe

Hard Pill

Good morning love
Thank you for sending the divine messenger
I might not have known otherwise
But now I do
The hardest thing to do is betray my own truth
The hardest thing to do is speak it
I trust You will guide me through
Endings are never easy
Neither are beginnings
And I love you
As long as I am in this world
May you know that truth
Time will be the healer
And you never quite let me in
I need to be welcomed

Good morning love
It is Grace that I see
Surrender just around the corner
I am down on my knees
For the honesty
For the power of a question
You pushed me into
Love enough to be direct and honest
Perhaps I will be doing you a favor
I think you have asked me not to hold on to you
And now I know I must let go
Whatever happens
Even when we don't desire it
God is ripening

—Nelle Turner

Last two lines borrowed from Rilke

Consumption

Nostalgia in the fall
Can crush my heart,
Create tears in my eyes,
Steal the very breath from me,
Wishing I had those moments
Just once more or
Never had them to begin with.

The smallest touch of crisp autumn air
Can make me shiver like the winter snow.

My tears fall as often as the leaves,
The breeze blows them across my cheeks.
Smearing them away with my fingertips,
I hang my head in confused wonder.
Why is it that pain never disappears?

It only fades to a certain degree,
Then what is left finds
A comfortable home in your heart
And consumes you.

How can I be consumed any longer,
When I have nothing left to give of myself?

—Angela R. Nguyen-Karnowski

That Sky

It was great, the sun you painted across my sky
It will remain forever within that which makes me cry
For joy or longing
We came in at a time when others had parted
It was a time of need
I wrote love poems in the bed we made whole
I thought (though did knot know it) I needed you to complete me
I forgot, I was whole from the beginning
From the first dream of me, I was whole
Just a child who forgot how to be a kid

I will miss your tender names and soft heart
I could run to you now
To ease my pain
To nip my growth
I have already asked enough of you
You gave the best you had to give
As did I
The best years so far, but I trust they keep getting better
Who would love the rose if she did not bloom
Who would praise the stars if the sun did not hide
I am finding this sacred space inside
From which no love hides
The place where I know it is all going to be okay
That the best students are given the hardest tests
That there is no turning back once you have grown
beyond what we are
That which we can no longer be
Not in the same way
In you I found and let go of my voice
Now I find and let go in me

Out there in the space of time
The love we tapped will last forever and a day
I feared in losing these parts of you I would lose love
Then I woke up to find that to be an impossibility
That your stars held the light, as did mine,
Though we faded at times into other skies
Your love won't die, nor will mine
If it was the last night of the world
That song would be the same
It's calling me now
That place I need to be
Somewhere out just beyond the roses you left me
The inner journey, unavoidable,
Avoidable at a price, always at a price

So I return and let go surrender die cry
And wish you the best years of your life
That lie ahead, as you find the One who has always been
Love the One who has always been strong, had the faith
The One who teaches you how to live the way you want to be
The loveliest flower from a garden we painted into the cosmos
New dreams, new stars, new light
As you gaze ahead you will find that
The truth has always been and will be you,
The One is not so far but don't reach out, reach in.
There, somewhere below Orion it was you all along
You chased me traced me gave me back to me
In that sky we shoot infinity E=MC²

—Nelle Turner

